

A close-up photograph of two hands shaking in a firm grip, with the hands wearing dark blue suit sleeves and white cuffs. The background is blurred.

Conflict Avoidance

Newsletter

January 2026

Welcome

May I start by wishing all our supporters a Happy and Healthy New Year.

At the end of last year, we received excellent feedback following our webinar: Why the Environment Agency is Embracing Conflict Avoidance. Building on that success, we're pleased to announce that for the first few months of 2026, our regular First Tuesday of the Month webinars will continue this theme by featuring interviews with some of our key supporters and partner organisations.

More details below.

Richard Bayfield, Chair

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1. Coalition Webinar Series: Embracing Conflict Avoidance

We're delighted to confirm that our next session will feature conversations with two of our long-term supporters:

CONFLICT AVOIDANCE COALITION ONLINE WEBINAR

*Embracing Conflict Avoidance: VVB Engineering
and Finishes and Interiors Sector*



February, 3rd 2026
09:30 - 10:30 am



Ed Schryver
VVB Engineering



Iain McIlwee
Finishes and Interiors Sector



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cac-uk.org

VVB Engineering (UK), Ed Schryver

VVB Engineering (UK) Ltd are a Mechanical and Electrical contractor that operate in the infrastructure market, in particular across Rail, Highways, Power/Energy, Tunnelling, Fire and Renewable Energy. They operate as a Principal Contractor direct to clients such as Network Rail, National Highways and Transport for London, and, as a Tier 2 specialist subcontractor to the likes of Balfour Beatty, Costain, Egis, Strabag, Kier and multiple HS2 projects including the fit-out of the Old Oak Common station in a joint venture with Egis. One of their key drivers is the promotion of systems led infrastructure to ensure the end requirements are focussed on throughout the project lifecycle.

Their involvement in the Conflict Avoidance Coalition stemmed from a number of key factors including:

- 1) Formal dispute resolution mechanisms changing beyond its original intent,
- 2) A number of competitors entering administration,
- 3) A change in approach to risk management in contracts,
- 4) Stagnation in contract administration leading to a strain on cashflow.

VVB fully understand and appreciate that they do not work in a perfect industry, and that differences in the valuation of projects and administration of contract mechanisms will always exist. However, a more collaborative approach to prevention of disputes before they are fully crystallised is vitally important to ensure all parties in the construction industry can thrive. The principles of the Conflict Avoidance Pledge is the starting commitment to this approach.

Finishes and Interiors Sector (FIS), Iain McIlwee

The Finishes and Interiors Sector (FIS) is the first trade association to be awarded 'gold status' by the Conflict Avoidance Coalition (CAC). Achieving the gold status commits FIS to promoting

early intervention, fairer contractual practices, and encouraging the adoption of the Conflict Avoidance Pledge (CAP) across its membership and wider industry networks.

This commitment is a reflection of the culture FIS is trying to build within the sector. It recognises that conflict avoidance is about improving relationships, protecting project outcomes and ultimately driving profitability and supporting investment in skills and productivity improvements. All of this is achieved by reducing the financial, emotional and time waste in dispute and encouraging enduring and sustainable relationships.

Gold status is a central plank of the FIS 'Responsible No' campaign and through this they will continue to champion collaborative working and early resolution. Iain is an advocate that safer buildings, skills shortages and adoption of innovation are rooted in the way that we procure and manage contracts and that real transformation starts here.

Date: Tuesday, 3rd February 2026

Time: 9:30 - 10:00am (online)

Joining details: [Click to join via Microsoft Teams](#)

We welcome and encourage all signatories and working group members to attend.

If you are interested in speaking at a future Coalition webinar or sharing your organisation's experience, we would welcome a conversation. Please contact us at info@cac-uk.org.

2. Key Update: 2026 Conference - Why are Clients adopting Conflict Avoidance Methods?

Unfortunately, due to logistical reasons, the Conference Committee has decided to postpone our annual conference from March to June. We are hoping to host an in person event in London on Wednesday 18th March. Once a new date has been confirmed for the conference, we will provide an update.

We're pleased to have already secured sponsorship from [Kier](#), [Fenwick Elliot](#), [VVB](#), [ResoLex](#), and AFPS.

If your organisation is interested in sponsorship opportunities, we would be delighted to hear from you!

By becoming a sponsor, you'll be helping to strengthen the Coalition's mission while showcasing your organisation's commitment to collaboration and early conflict resolution across the industry.

[Visit our website for more information on sponsorship.](#)

CONFLICT AVOIDANCE COALITION CONFERENCE 2026

By sharing knowledge, promoting best practices, and supporting early resolution methods, we're making the industry more resilient, efficient, and productive.

Together, we are shaping a future where conflicts are managed constructively - and often prevented entirely.



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SPONSOR



TBC, London

3. Coalition Working Group Updates

The Working Groups are continuing to make progress across our priority areas:

Communications and Engagement:

We continue to advance our campaign to raise awareness of the Conflict Avoidance Process (CAP) and the work of the Coalition. With the launch of our new website, all previous Pledge Signatories are required to re-sign the Pledge. This can easily be done by logging into the website and visiting the Pledge section. To date, more than 300 organisations and individuals across the United Kingdom have signed the Pledge.

We are also actively engaging with new Signatories, offering support to help them embed CAP principles into their everyday business practices. To assist with this, we provide a range of downloadable resources including articles, podcasts, and webinars that organisations can use to familiarise their teams and supply chains with CAP and its benefits.

Our outreach extends to the devolved governments in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Recently, we had the opportunity to deliver a presentation to procuring authorities in Scotland. In addition, the Environment Agency's recent commitment to CAP has encouraged several of its framework businesses to sign the Pledge, marking a significant milestone for the Coalition. It is also encouraging to see more organisations coming forward to become Silver and Gold Partners.

Anyone interested in contributing to a working group, please contact us to express your interest info@conflictavoidance.org.

4. Newest Signatories

As the Coalition continues to grow, we're pleased to welcome our newest signatories who have joined our shared commitment to building a more collaborative and proactive industry. Each new sign-up strengthens our collective ambition to prevent conflict before it arises and to embed constructive dialogue at every level of project delivery.

NEWEST SIGNATORIES

- A D Design Consultants Ltd
- Contract Nexus Ltd
- DCP Limited
- East West Connect
- Flux Fire Protection Group Limited
- Grob Group Ltd
- Hardies
- HCR Fire Stopping
- Innovation Fire Engineering Ltd
- Invicta Storage Systems Ltd
- Jeremy Benn Associates Limited
- Kyle Smart Associates Ltd
- Lakesside Ltd
- Siddons Yeates Sharples Ltd
- Tethion Ltd



Visit our [website](#) to find out all of the organisations that've pledged their support.